

Division of Commercial Fisheries  
Sam Rabung, Director

Homer Area Office  
3298 Douglas Place  
Homer, AK 99603



Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner

PO Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526  
[www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov)

## Advisory Announcement

*For Immediate Release: February 3, 2021*

**CONTACT: Jan Rumble and Elisa Russ**  
**Groundfish Area Management Biologists**  
**(907) 235-8191**

### **Prince William Sound Area Parallel Pacific Cod Season Closes to Longline Gear State-Waters Pacific Cod Season Opens to Longline Gear March 6 Emergency Order # 2-GF-E-06-21**

The Prince William Sound Area (PWS) **parallel Pacific cod season will close to longline gear at 12:00 noon February 5**. This closure coincides with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) closure of the Pacific cod less than 50 foot in length hook and line (<50' HAL) gear sector in the federal Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA) area. The PWS parallel Pacific cod season remains open to vessels using jig gear.

The PWS **state-waters Pacific cod season will open to longline gear at 12:00 noon March 6**, concurrent with the individual fishing quota (IFQ) halibut season opening date, as provided in the Prince William Sound Pacific Cod Management Plan (5 AAC 28.267). The total guideline harvest level (GHL) for the PWS state-waters season is 1,094,044 lb of Pacific cod with 85% or 929,937 lb allocated to longline gear. The PWS state-waters Pacific cod season remains open to vessels using pot gear.

Fishermen are reminded that there is a 24-hour delivery time requirement following closure of a groundfish fishery (5 AAC 28.271).

Fishermen must obtain a PWS area registration for the state-waters Pacific cod season before participating in the state-waters season. Area registration for the PWS state-waters Pacific cod season for longline gear is exclusive. Vessel registrations may be obtained from ADF&G offices in Homer, Cordova, or Anchorage. Due to COVID-19, vessel operators are encouraged to contact the Homer office by phone (907-235-8191) and arrange to register by fax or e-mail. A vessel may not participate in a state-waters Pacific cod season and any other Pacific cod season at the same time.

Fishermen participating in the state-waters Pacific cod season are required to **check in with the department prior to each fishing trip** by telephoning (907) 424-7225 and reporting the following three items: 1) vessel name, 2) estimated date and time of departure for trip, and 3) estimated length of trip (5 AAC 28.020(c)). This requirement is detailed on the area registration form.

**Fishing area:** During a state-waters season, Pacific cod may be taken in PWS waters (5 AAC 28.205) except for those waters of the Outside District east of 146° 15.12' W. long. (the latitude of Hook Point) as described under 5 AAC 28.267(e)(2) (Figure 1).

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**Steller Sea Lion rookery closures:** Directed fishing for all groundfish species is closed in waters within 3 nautical miles of two Steller sea lion rookeries within PWS (Figure 1). For specific regulatory language contact NMFS in Kodiak at (907) 481-1780 or <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/sslpm>.

**Bycatch limits:** Bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for the PWS Area are set by Emergency Order 2-GF-E-01-21 and may be found in the Central Region Groundfish Fisheries Outlook news release.

### ***COVID-19***

Under Alaska's Health Orders 5, 6, and 8, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Orders. COVID-19 Health Orders may be found here: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-order/>.

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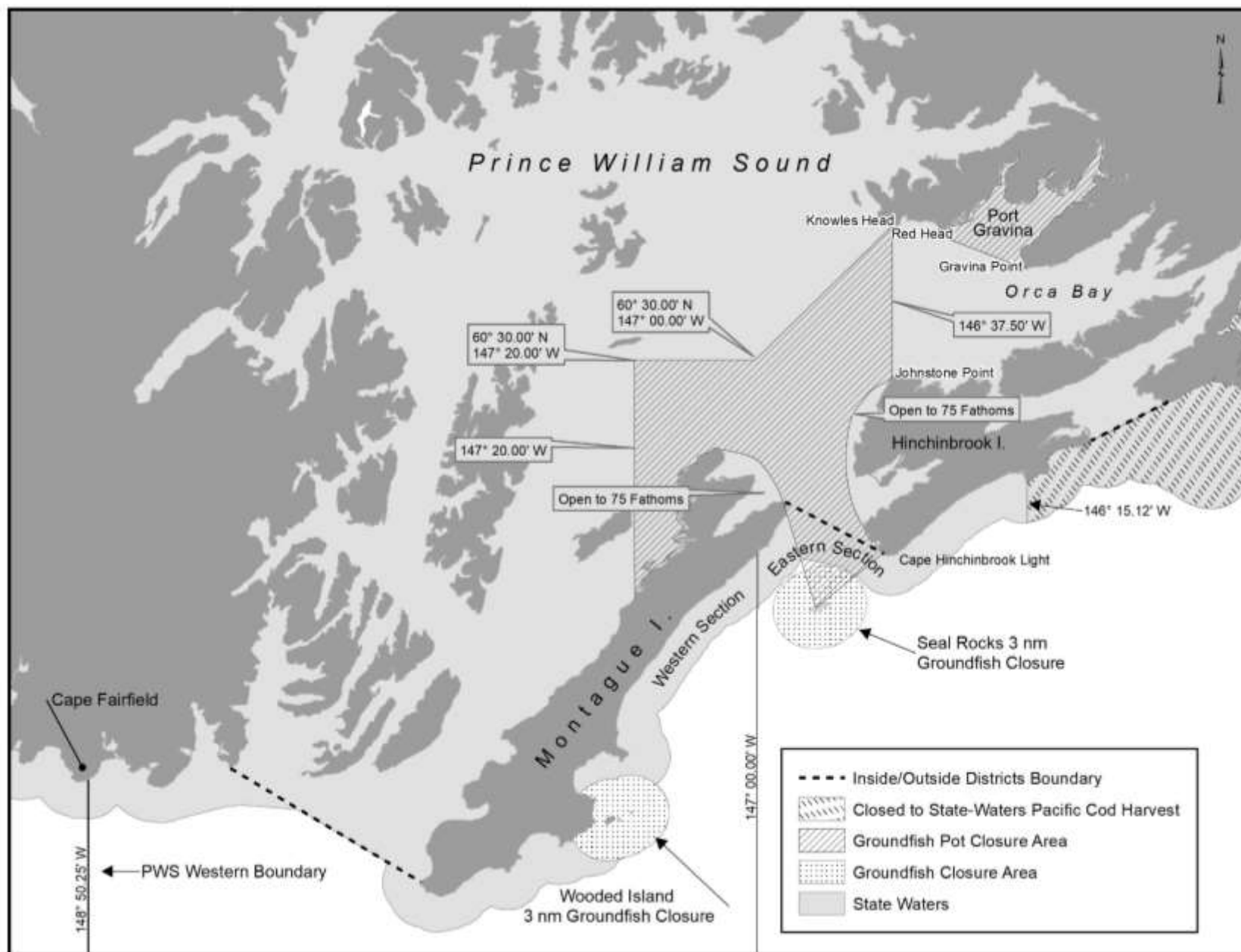


Figure 1. Prince William Sound Area closures to groundfish pot gear, groundfish fishing, and to the state-waters Pacific cod season.

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